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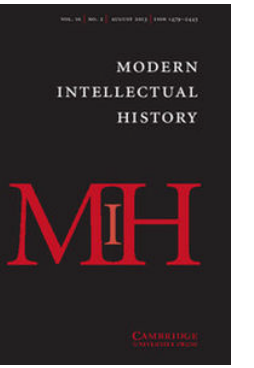

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FORUM: A WORLD OF IDEAS: NEW PATHWAYS IN GLOBAL INTELLECTUAL HISTORY, *C.*1880–1930*

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INTRODUCTION

This forum explores new directions in global intellectual history, engaging with the methodologies of global and transnational history to move beyond conventional territorial boundaries and master narratives. The papers focus on the period between the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth, an era in which the growth of cities, burgeoning print cultures and new transport and communications technology enabled the accelerated circulation and exchange of ideas throughout the globe.[1] The proliferation of conferences, world fairs, and international congresses, the growing professionalization and definition of academic disciplines, and the enhanced circulation of scholarly journals and correspondence enabled intellectuals around the world to converse in shared vocabularies. Much of the scholarship on early twentieth-century intellectual history in the non-Western world has been viewed through the binary relationships of metropole and colony, or as nationalist reactions to colonial domination. This cluster widens the framework to consider the way in which intellectuals formed scholarly networks and gathered multiple influences to articulate new visions of community and society within a wider world of ideas.[2] The multiplicity of

* We are grateful to Andrew Arsan for his comments on multiple versions of this piece.

1 Christopher A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Oxford, 2004).

2 We draw inspiration from advances in global intellectual history in recent years particular in the field of Latin American studies and South Asian history. For Latin America, studies

imperial and transnational pathways allowed not only for "centers of calculation" in colonial metropoles, but also for points of convergence and encounter outside Europe. As these papers show, the routes by which ideas travelled brought forth a global republic of letters, composed of diverse "centers" for the collection and production of knowledge by intellectuals operating in different parts of the world.[3]

A range of approaches is open to practitioners of this new, global intellectual history. They may turn to a comparison of intellectual practices across space or chronologically through time; they may look at conceptual movement, at the "reception" or appropriation of scientific practices and philosophical discourse; some may look at polyglot individuals – knowledge brokers – and their ways of thinking and writing; while again others may focus on connectedness, on networks of exchanges and encounters across multiple centers and regions.[4] The essays in this cluster showcase some of the different available choices for globalizing intellectual history, at what Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori have referred to as a threshold moment in the formation of this new field.[5] Rather than opting in and out of set approaches, or painting reception and network models as irreconcilable or incompatible methodologies, the papers in this cluster point to the possibility of coexisting focuses. Each centers on a particular intellectual entity—a text, in Andrew Arsan's paper; a discipline, in Aria Laskin's; a learned

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on Creole intellectual circuits and the history of Iberian science are a burgeoning field. See, for instance, Daniela Bleichmar, Paula de Vos, Kristin Huffine and Kevin Sheehan, *Science in the Spanish and Portuguese Empires, 1500–1800* (Stanford, 2009), Juan Pimentel, "The Iberian Vision: Science and Empire in the Framework of a Universal Monarchy, 1500–1800", *Osiris*, 15 (2000), 17–30, Jorge Cañizares Esguerra, "Iberian Colonial Science", *Isis* 96 (2005), 64–70. For the South Asian context see Shruti Kapila *et al.*, *An Intellectual History for India*, *MIH* 4/1 (2007); Kris Manjapra and S. Majapra Bose, *Cosmopolitan Thought Zones: South Asia and the Global Circulation of Ideas* (Basingstoke, 2010); Andrew Sartori, *Bengal in Global Concept History: Culturalism in the Age of Capital* (Chicago, 2008).

3 Bruno Latour's concept of the "centre of calculation" refers to a metropolitan center that possesses the power to maintain a cycle of accumulation through a wide network of individuals and institutions. See B. Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Cambridge, 1987). For an application of the concept to the Indian intellectual context see Savithri Preetha Nair, "Native Collecting and Natural Knowledge (1798–1832): Raja Serfoji II of Tanjore as a 'Centre of Calculation'", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 15 (2005), 279–302.

4 On the appropriation of scientific practices and networks see especially Lissa Roberts, "Situating Science in Global History: Local Exchanges and Networks of Circulation", *Itinerario* 33 (2009), 9–30.

5 Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori, "Approaches to Global Intellectual History," in Moyn and Sartori, eds., *Global Intellectual History* (New York, 2013).

society, in Su Lin Lewis's; and an object, in Stefanie Gänger's—critically engaging with knowledge broker, networks, and reception models alike.

Andrew Arsan's paper focuses on the Ottoman religious scholar Shaykh Ahmad Tabbarah, closely reading his speech to a congress of Arab reformists in Paris as a site of dialogue between Western sociology and Islamic rhetoric, employed as a political critique of the Ottoman Empire. Aria Laskin's paper explores the transnational formation of Indian psychology in Calcutta, viewing the discipline as a site of confluence between classical Indian thought and the emergence of the new European science of the mind. Su Lin Lewis tracks the emergence of learned societies throughout Southeast Asian cities as spaces of intellectual encounter across imperial and racial lines, forging a new sense of regionalism. Stefanie Gänger focuses on the loss and "disjuncture" of ideas about objects, following an Andean stone table on its journey from a Southern Highland village near Cuzco to a Berlin museum.

The papers place different emphases in their methodological orientation: Arsan's and Laskin's papers take up notions of Western "diffusion" and non-European derivative "reception", examining how cosmopolitan intellectuals in India and the Ottoman Empire creatively interwove Indian or Arabic intellectual traditions with European ideas, creating new forms of intellectual currency for the local and national political environments in which they operated. Lewis and Gänger, on the other hand, focus on the emergence of diverse centers for the patronage, accumulation, and communication of knowledge in South East Asia and South America, tending towards the study of transnational networks and encounters. The intellectuals discussed by Gänger and Lewis met in associational spaces open to foreigners and local elites alike, in salons and living rooms, learned societies and universities, to converse, to discuss, and to exchange ideas and objects. Their intellectual communities materialized through institutions, social relationships and companionable circles, stretching across the Atlantic and the Pacific, where trust and testimony, gentlemanly sociability and friendship allowed ideas to travel.[6]

Ideas rarely traveled effortlessly around the world. This multi-directional, multi-centered republic of letters was fraught with unevenness, with relations that were, at times, hierarchical and exclusive, entailing complex processes of

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6 James A. Secord, "Knowledge in Transit", *Isis* 95 (2004), 654–72. For recent attempts at writing a social history of knowledge production for Latin America see, for instance, Neil Safier, *Measuring the New World: Enlightenment Science and South America* (Chicago and London, 2008). On the role of friendship in global intellectual history see Leela Gandhi, *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship* (Durham, 2006); Vanessa Smith, *Intimate Strangers: Friendship, Exchange and Pacific Encounters* (Cambridge, 2010).

negotiation and contestation. Despite the growing plurality of networks and modes of transmission across the multiple centers, the actors examined here were acutely aware of the power relationships of the modern world, through an often painful experience of seeking political and cultural recognition from an international audience. Gänger in particular reminds us of mechanisms of exclusion, challenging the language of effortless liquidity so prevalent in research about the globalization of ideas today. The curtailment, rather than the transmission, of ideas within these far-flung networks is most explicitly discussed in her analysis of an Andean village scene, which points to the tensions of translation between a cosmopolitan, educated intelligentsia and the people they presume to speak for.[7] Ideas traveled to and fro for various reasons and they moved across uneven terrain, made rugged by relationships of power, exclusion, and hierarchy inherent in these global intellectual pathways.

In placing papers from across the globe together, this cluster shows that "the local" and "the global", like "the centre" and "the periphery", are relative concepts, a matter of perspective. Ideas are always contingent on the one hand, while on the other they may bear the possibility of travel, of going global. With regard to networks, philosophers of science have long argued that "each locality has the capacity to become central, to act as the node of a circuit of information."[8] Far from simply catering to the demands of a Eurocentric world of scholarship and letters, intellectuals in Asia, the eastern Mediterranean and Latin America sought to recenter intellectual pursuits around their institutions and social circles. As Gänger and Laskin show, the "centers" of Incan archaeology were not only Berlin and New York but also the salons of *fin de siècle* Cuzco, while the new discipline of psychology was shaped not only in Paris and Boston but also in the new laboratories of Calcutta University. Unraveling conventional lines of influence from colony to metropole, Lewis, in turn, tracks the interconnected emergence of the learned society from Singapore and Batavia to Bangkok and Rangoon, cities that served as new intellectual centers in the shaping of Southeast Asian studies.

The intellectuals examined in this cluster not only brokered dialogues between the West and the non-West but spoke to shifting visions of community in helping to shape new public spheres. While discourses about the nation come into play in Laskin's paper on Indian psychology, Lewis points to the possibilities of

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7 For one recent critical discussion of the "mobility bias" in global history see Stuart A. Rockefeller, "Flow," *Current Anthropology* 52 (2011), 557–78.

8 As Sujit Sivasundaram points out, inspired by Bruno Latour's work, networks have had a major impact on the history of science, allowing for the possibility of moving beyond centers and peripheries. See S. Sivasundaram, "Sciences and the Global: On Methods, Questions, and Theory", *Isis* (2010), 146–58.

writing different kinds of history of the nation, as well as coexisting adherences to communal, national, cosmopolitan, or regional identities via the pluralist space of the learned society and its networks. Arsan, meanwhile, highlights the shortcomings of readings which reduce texts to indices of identity which can then be arrayed in a taxonomical arrangement of different modes of nationalist thought. All papers reveal how intellectual circles in Asia, the eastern Mediterranean, and Latin America in the decades around 1900 materialized through a variety of endeavors, necessities, and desires. While intellectuals in these areas sought to partake in the shaping of collective identities, nations, and regions, they also sought to enhance their social standing, to cast wide professional and scholarly networks, and forge new lines of critical solidarity.

Most importantly, however, these men and women were cultural brokers and translators, urging us to question the essentially confrontational relation between Europe and the great wide world outside it that an influential body of scholarship has long assumed.[9] Their very existence challenges us to "fragment" intellectual traditions from multiple perspectives and to think beyond the binary categories of the colonized and colonial or the European and the non-European.[10] These papers elucidate how modern intellectual cultures in the non-European world emerged not as a binary, reactionary dialogue between colonizer and colonized but within an expansive, global field of ideas in which intellectuals in Asia, the eastern Mediterranean, and Latin America took part, operating within widening scholarly, professional, and critical circles. Via their efforts, new intellectual nodes materialized in the early twentieth century across the Americas and the Afro-Asian world, as Ottoman men of religion, Cuzco antiquaries, Calcutta psychologists, and Southeast Asian literati all thought of themselves as the centers of an expanding intellectual universe.

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9 In this sense, it follows in the wake of a recent collective volume discussing "go-betweens." See, for instance, Simon Schaffer, Lissa Roberts, Kapil Raj, and James Delbourgo, "Introduction," in S. Schaffer, L. Roberts, K. Raj and J. Delbourgo, eds., *The Brokered World: Go-Betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770–1820* (Sagamore Beach, 2009), xiv.

10 On "fragmenting" traditions of knowledge see Sivasundaram, "Sciences and the Global."